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AUTHOR Smith, Timothy A.; McNeal, Donald R.
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ABSTRACT

A new University of Kentucky course, developed to prepare dental students for the initial encounter and treatment of patients, is described. Offered during the second year of dental school, the course focus is on the interpersonal interactions that occur during the initial treatment of patients. The course consists of three two-hour seminars taught by two instructors to 15 students who are assigned readings on communication, listening to feelings, and talking to patients. Students also attend lectures on the personality characteristics of dentists, variables associated with demand for dental services, patient motivation, the practitioner/patient relationship and patient rights and responsibilities. The clinical situation is recreated through use of audio and video tapes that demonstrate phone calls, waiting room behavior, problems in escorting patients to the dental chair, and establishing and maintaining patient rapport. Students role play to practice strategies for handling the stress involved with the patient/doctor situation. Favorable feedback from students is reported. Instructors' methodology is applicable to clinical faculty from other departments. A seminar outline is provided. (Author/LC)

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PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THEIR INITIAL PATIENT ENCOUNTER - AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH

Timothy A. Smith, Ph.D.*
Professor of Community Dentistry
University of Kentucky

Donald R. McNeal, D.M.D., M.P.H.
Associate Professor of Community Dentistry
University of Kentucky

Presentation Category: New Educational Programs

Audiovisual Needs: A Video Tape Player and Monitor

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PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THEIR INITIAL
PATIENT ENCOUNTER - AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH

A new course was developed to prepare students for the initial encounter and treatment of patients. This course was offered during the second year of dental school when students were initially assigned patients for treatment. The course focused on the interpersonal interactions that would occur during the initial treatment of patients.

Students were assigned readings on communication, listening to feelings and talking to patients. They attended lectures on the personality characteristics of dentists, variables associated with demand for dental services, patient motivation, the practitioner/patient relationship and patient rights and responsibilities.

The innovative component of the course consisted of three two-hour seminars taught by two instructors to 15 students at a time. These seminars covered the patient interaction from the initial phone call until dismissal after treatment including follow-up communication with patients and recall procedures. The clinic situation was recreated through the use of audio and video tapes which demonstrated phone calls, waiting room behavior, problems in escorting the patients to the dental chair and establishing and maintaining rapport with the patient. Faculty, student, and patient interaction problems were also depicted using trigger films. Students discussed these video taped incidents, developing strategies for handling these stress producing interactions. Role playing exercises allowed students to practice these strategies.

In addition, students were given a written assignment in which they translated dental terminology from technical to lay vocabulary. Students were asked to keep a written diary of their relations with patients, focusing especially on one interesting incident of a practitioner-patient interaction. Students placed summaries of their interactions on newsprint posters and in small groups discussed the various incidents.

These seminars are appropriate for students beginning patient treatment. Several of the trigger films have been shared with other dental schools.

Students have reported via formal course evaluation questionnaires and through the Curriculum Committee that the seminars helped them considerably in developing relationships with patients. Because of the favorable feedback from students, the instructors were requested to share the course content and methodology with clinical faculty from other departments.

SEMINAR OUTLINE

SEMINAR I - 2 Hours

A. Telephone Call - 1st encounter with patient (do's and don't's) - audiotape.

B. Preparing for Patient visit
   2 videotapes depicting student faculty interactions prior to patient visit. Accompanied by student behaviors, faculty behaviors, patient behaviors.

C. The Waiting Room
   Videotape demonstrating potential anxiety producing situations in waiting room.

D. The Journey
   Videotape of patient's walk from waiting room down clinic corridor to student's operatory. Patient observes dental instruments being cleaned, patients receiving care and other sights and sounds hardly conducive to a pleasant dental visit.

SEMINAR II - 2 Hours

A. Patient in Operatory
   A videotape depicting placement of patient in chair, operating, and dismissal.

B. Student-Faculty Interaction
   Two videotapes showing a student and faculty interacting over a patient's treatment. Refers to appropriate student-faculty behaviors.

C. Translation Exercise
   Students in workgroups of 4-5 persons translate dental technical terms into lay language; and report their recommendations at plenary session.

D. Diary Assignment
   Students are given assignment to keep diary of patient encounter to be discussed in Seminar III.

SEMINAR III - 2 Hours

A. Diary Assignment
   Using newsprint students write highlights of diary, tape to walls, and discuss with fellow students - faculty moderating discussion.

B. Clinician Grid - an inventory of clinician behaviors. Adapted from Blake, Mouton "The Social Worker Grid".

C. Behavioral Standards Assignment
   Workgroups of 4-5 students to report findings at Seminar IV.

SEMINAR IV - 2 Hours

A. Behavioral Standards Assignment
   Reports from various workgroups and discussion.

B. Patient Interview
   Patient discusses (on videotape) the evolution of her dental care, citing events noteworthy. Videotape in segments to permit student discussion. Student listening skills tested.

C. Evaluation of Seminars
   Faculty effectiveness
   Seminar content

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

1. Lecture sessions slightly useful

2. Reading assignments - not useful to slightly useful

3. Seminars - useful to highly useful
   - seminar format preferred.